

Amendments to the Specification:

Please amend the application as follows.

Please insert pages 60-61 containing the Sequence Listing.

Please replace the paragraph at page 35, lines 17-25 with the following paragraph:

--Fc α R mRNA expression was confirmed in both RA (n=9 different subjects) and OA (n=4) synovial fibroblasts by RT-PCR. Figure 2 shows representative data from a total of 3 different patients with RA and 3 with OA. Primers for the the IgA binding domain of Fc α R (sense: 5' CCT CAG TCT GGG GCT TTC TTT 3' (SEQ ID NO:1); antisense: 5' CTT GTT TGC GTC CAT GTG GTC 3' (SEQ ID NO:2)) were used. The bands obtained from the RT-PCR product were DNA sequenced and confirmed to be sequences of their respective IgA receptors. These results confirm that RA and OA synovial fibroblasts express mRNA for Fc α R.--

Please replace the paragraph at page 36, lines 9-25 with the following paragraph:

--RA is characterized by increased activity of the pro-inflammatory transcription factor, NF κ B, in synovial fibroblasts. Both RA and OA are chronic inflammatory conditions, but RA is an autoimmune inflammatory disease. To determine whether expression of IgA receptors might play a role in the inflammation of RA and OA, we asked whether pIgA stimulates NF κ B DNA binding in RA and OA synovial fibroblasts. We found that pIgA induced a dose-dependent increase in NF κ B activity in both RA and OA synovial fibroblasts by DNA electromobility gel shift assay (EMSA)(Figure 4). EMSA was performed using the Promega gel shift assay system. The NF κ B consensus oligonucleotide (5' AGT TGA GGG GAC TTT CCC AGG C-3' (SEQ ID NO:3))

representing the p65 subunit was end-labeled with [γ - 32 P]ATP using T4 polynucleotide kinase. EMSA was done using 5 μ g of nuclear extract proteins and labeled oligonucleotide. The protein-DNA complex was separated on polyacrylamide gel, which was then exposed to autoradiographic film. This effect of IgA on increasing NFkB DNA binding in synovial fibroblasts has never been described and has major implications for the role of IgA receptors in RA and OA.--

Please replace Table 1 at page 51 with the following Table 1:

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TABLE 1

Protein

pIgR: cytoplasmic domain
sense (SEQ ID NO:4)
antisense (SEQ ID NO:5)

Fc α R: IgA binding domain
sense (SEQ ID NO:1)
antisense (SEQ ID NO:2)

Primer sequences

5' GAC CCC ACT CCC TGC TCT AAC 3'
5' AGA AGA GGG GAA GGA CGG GAG 3'

5' CCT CAG TCT GGG GCT TTC TTT 3'
5' CTT GTT TGC GTC CAT GTG GTC 3'

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